

REMARKS

New claims 22-24 are presented for examination. Claims 1-21 are now canceled.

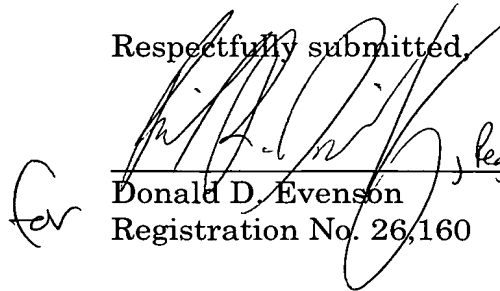
Both rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) set forth in the Office Action dated November 18, 2003, are moot as a result of the claim amendments set forth above. The Hiruta et al. and Kajiwaka patents, taken as a whole, fail to suggest (1) a rolling method comprising the particular repeating, fixing, and changing operations required by claim 22, (2) a rolling method comprising the particular repeating and giving operations required by claim 23, or (3) a strip rolling facility comprising the particular work roll axial position fixing and intermediate roll axial position changing means required by claim 24. The Hiruta et al., Kajiwaka, and Kajiwara et al. patents, taken as a whole, also fail to suggest these limitations, and each of claims 22-24 is patentable.

This application is now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions after considering this Reply, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

Date: April 19, 2004

CROWELL & MORING LLP
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, D.C. 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844
DDE:RRD:msy

Respectfully submitted,


Donald D. Evenson, Reg. No. 32,390,
Registration No. 26,160